

## ARABIC NAMING

Arabic names are patrilineal. This means you use your given name, followed by your father's name, followed by your grandfather's name...etc.

**nisba** We also have what is called a 'nisba', that can be loosely translated to 'family name'. The nisba ends with a y (or i depending on how you transliterate it) and may refer to your tribe, your clan, your city or country or place of birth (or the one you are most known by) or that of one of your ancestors, or your profession or that of one of your ancestors, or a combination of which. This means you can have more than one nisba.

**Al-Laqab** You also may have what is known as Al-Laqab, or a title. It's not an official or social title, it's a personal title - you know like some European kings have such as "Richard the Lionheart" or "Catherine the Great", except this is not limited to royalty or nobility (technically there is no nobility system in Arabic culture).

**Kunyya** You also may have what is known as a Kunyya. It's sort of like a name of respect. It starts with *Abu* for a man (literally 'father of') or *Umm* for a woman (literally 'mother of') followed by the name of the eldest or most prominent child they have. However, you can also use arbitrary names if you don't have any children and you wanted one, or something might stick to you unintentionally. Abu Huraira was a prominent Islamic figure. He did not have a daughter called Huraira, the name literally means "father of the kitten", it stuck to him because he actually had a kitten that he loved and took with him wherever he went. The name remained even after the kitten became a cat and then eventually died of old age.

Usually a person has *one* patrilineal name - it is the official one. And at least *one* nisba, usually more than one. Some may have *one* Laqab and/or *one* Kunyya. The Kunyya (if any), followed by personal name, followed by Laqab (if any), followed by patrilineal sequence (as long as needed, with their own Laqabs if any), followed by clan based nisba (in proper sequence of clans and sub-clans), followed by any other nisba he may have (if any) in no particular order.

Form: Kunyya; personal name; Laqab; patrilineal with their own Laqabs; nisba 1; nisba 2; nisba 3 ...

Example (real one):

Abu Ja'far Harun Al Rasheed bin Muhammed Al Mahdi bin Abdullah Al Mansur bin Ali bin Abdullah ibn Al Abbas ibn Abdul Mutallib ibn Hashim Al Abbasi Al Hashimi Al Qurashi.

Translation:

Father of Ja'far, **Harun** the Wise son of **Muhammed** the Guided son of **Abdullah** the Victorious son of **Ali** son of **Abdullah** son of **Al-Abbas** son of **Abdul Muttalib** son of **Hashim** the Abbasid the Hashimid the Qurashid.

The **bold** is his patrilineal name. He has three nisbas (that I know of), the **first** is the Abbasid clan (which gave its name to the dynasty) after his great great great grandfather Al Abbas ibn Abdul Mutallib, which is a sub-clan of the **second**, the Hashimid clan after His great great great great grandfather Hashim ibn Abd Manaf (he can also be added, but I suppose this is enough). The Hashimid clan is in turn a sub-clan of the

Quraish tribe of Makka, his **third** nisba. If you know Arab tribes you can add more but three is more than enough. The **Kunyya** at the beginning of his name does not refer to a son he has, it was a Kunya he chose before he even got married - he never had a son called Ja'far. Also, his **Laqab** Al Rasheed, while I personally find the best translation for it to be "the wise", it actually means more than just wise. Most English books on him translate it as "The Just".

**Harun Muhammed Abdullah Al-Abbasi** - this is how it would be written in his ID card, passport, degree certificates, and/or employment records. His business card and how he presents himself to people would be simply: **Harun Al Abbasi**

As others have mentioned both ابن Ibin and بن Bin mean son, and are used in Arabic naming system, and if I'm not wrong, other Semites use the same system sometimes.

These two words are actually the same word but the word Ibin has an Aleph in the beginning, that kind of Aleph is called "همزة وصل" Hamazat Wasl which is a glottal stop that is only pronounced if started with, which means, when Ibin or bin are in the middle of speech they are pronounced exactly the same.

There are three situations where Bin is used and more for Ibin:

#### **Bin:**

1. If used between a man's name and his biological father's name.
2. If was preceded by a calling particle.

Example: O Jacob son of Issac يا يعقوب بن اسحاق.

3. If it was preceded question particle.

Example: Is that your son? أبنك هذا؟

#### **Ibin:**

1. Between a man's name and the name of his grandfather (grandngrandn where  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ).
2. Between a man's name and his mother's name.
3. If it was in a question (different from 3 above).

Example: Is that Omar son of Ammar؟ أهذا عمر ابن عمار؟

4. If it was between a man's name and the word "His father".

Example: Ziad son of his father زياد ابن أبيه.

5. If it was a dual (in addition to singular and plural, in Arabic we have a dual form of words) .

Example: Ahmad and Mahmoud sons(dual) of Kamal أحمد ومحمود ابنا كمال.

6. If the "Son" was connected to a pronoun suffix.

Example: Yaser son-of-you ياسر ابنك

7. If it the word “Son” was a Khabar خبر. If you don’t know what that is, just ignore it, it’s a grammatical thing.
8. In the beginning or the end of the line even if the sentence is not finished yet.
9. If there was a pronoun between the man’s name and his father’s.

Example: Ali he [is] son of Sameer مير علي هو ابن س

10. Between a man's name and an adjective, feature, or qualification of his father/grandfather... etc

Example: Omar son of the courage عمر ابن الشجاع

11. In idiomatic calling (I don't know if that's the right translation). For example:

- For brother: Son of mother/father ابن أبي/امي
- For an Arabian man: Son of Arabs ابن العرب
- For a man from the same country: Son of nation/country/state...etc ابن البلد

The examples’ translation in English might not sound good, but I wrote them as close as possible to their Arabic form.

The words **Ibnat** ابنة and **Bnat** بنة are the feminine equivalent of Ibn and Bin meaning “daughter of”, they usually follow the same pattern, but not necessarily; there is also the word **Bint** بنت that also means “daughter of” and can be used the same way but it also means “girl”.

That system of naming is mostly used in the Arabian peninsula, in Saudi Arabia it’s used even in school, while in Syria it is only used in official documents, otherwise just first and last name usually.

## “al”

There are two types of “al”

“Al” (ال) where the a is pronounced like u in “hut” can mean “*the*” or “*of*”. If your last name is “al-Baghdadi” (البغدادى), that means that you are from Baghdad.

“Al” (آل) where the a is pronounced like a in “far” means “*house/tribe of*”. If your last name is “Al-Nahyan” (آل نهيان), that means that you belong to the House of Nahyan or the Nahyan Tribe.

## Abu

A Kunya (Arabic) is name of adult derived from his or her eldest child. Kunya is expressed by the use of *Abu* as a honor in place or alongside given name in Arab and Islamic world generally.

It is generally in the tradition of Arabs that the first male son (the oldest sibling in the future) names his first son after his father, in order to immortalize his father's name and bless his memory. For example, my name is Muhammad, and I would call my first son "*Abu Muhammad*" just as he would call his first son Muhammad. If his name is Hamza, he would call his first son *Muhammad* "*Abu Hamza*". Fathers tend to do this to express their joy and pride of their newborn son.

Some names have default "Abu" names mostly based on historical Islamic leaders (such that the default is used in lieu of the name? Instead of Abu Mohammed, Abu Jassim is used?):

- Mohammed: Abu Jassim (Jassim=Qasim)
- Khalid: Abu Alwaleed
- Abdulaziz: Abu Saud

**Al-** and **El-** mean *the*; *al-* is favored in English speaking places and those speak English as a second language people and *el-* is favored in French-speaking countries.